

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1815

Introduced by Assembly Member Feuer

January 17, 2008

An act to add and repeal Section 87 of the Streets and Highways Code, relating to transportation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1815, as introduced, Feuer. California Transportation Infrastructure Funding Task Force.

Existing law provides various sources of revenue to fund state highway and local road maintenance, operation, and improvement, including a state-imposed per-gallon fuel tax of 18 cents.

This bill would create, until January 1, 2010, the California Transportation Infrastructure Funding Task Force, with 14 members appointed by the Legislature, Governor, California Transportation Commission, city and county organizations, and other specified entities. The bill would require the task force to hold at least 3 public hearings around the state and to report to the Legislature and Governor by January 1, 2010, on alternatives to the current system of taxing road users through per-gallon fuel taxes. The bill would make legislative findings and declarations in that regard.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

1 (a) An efficient transportation system is critical for California's
2 economy and quality of life.

3 (b) Per-gallon taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel and truck weight
4 fees are the dominant sources of funding for highway system
5 maintenance and expansion.

6 (c) The revenues currently available for state highways and
7 local roads are inadequate to preserve and maintain existing
8 infrastructure and to provide funds for improvements that would
9 reduce congestion and improve mobility.

10 (d) State transit programs, including the State Transit Assistance
11 program that funds local transit services, as well as the state's own
12 intercity rail program, are directly dependent on the Public
13 Transportation Account, which derives revenues from sales taxes
14 on gasoline and diesel fuel. The revenues available for these
15 programs are also inadequate to preserve and maintain existing
16 transit infrastructure and to sustain current levels of transit
17 operations that both reduce congestion and serve the nonmotoring
18 public.

19 (e) Increased vehicle fuel efficiency provides valuable energy
20 conservation and environmental benefits. However, per-gallon
21 fuel taxes will steadily generate less revenue as vehicles become
22 more fuel efficient and alternative sources of fuel are identified.
23 Declining revenues per vehicle mile traveled, coupled with inflation
24 and increasing construction costs, causes this revenue source to
25 fall short of meeting the state's transportation revenue needs.

26 (f) Between 1994, when fuel taxes were last adjusted, and 2006,
27 travel on the state highway system increased by 27 percent, from
28 144.2 billion to 183.4 billion vehicle miles traveled. Similarly,
29 travel on the local street and road system over the same period
30 increased by 12 percent, from 127.6 billion to 143 billion vehicle
31 miles traveled. Collectively, both the state and local systems
32 support nearly 20 percent more traffic today than just 12 years
33 ago.

34 (g) Thus, the trend is not favorable and, over time, the per-gallon
35 fuel tax will become a less effective mechanism for meeting
36 California's long-term transportation needs.

37 (h) It is therefore appropriate to convene a task force to consider
38 and make recommendations concerning alternatives to the current
39 system of taxing highway users through per-gallon fuel taxes.

1 SEC. 2. Section 87 is added to the Streets and Highways Code,
2 to read:

3 87. (a) There is hereby created the California Transportation
4 Infrastructure Funding Task Force, which shall consist of 14
5 members, as follows:

6 (1) Two members appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.

7 (2) Two members appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

8 (3) Two members appointed by the Governor.

9 (4) Three members appointed by the California Transportation
10 Commission. In making appointments under this paragraph, the
11 commission shall consider individuals who are representative of
12 highway users' groups, including transit providers, the California
13 transportation research community, and national transportation
14 research and transportation policy bodies.

15 (5) One member appointed by the League of California Cities.

16 (6) One member appointed by the California State Association
17 of Counties.

18 (7) One member appointed by the California Transit Association.

19 (8) One representative from the California State Automobile
20 Association, on behalf of the motoring public.

21 (9) One representative from the Automobile Club of Southern
22 California, on behalf of the motoring public.

23 (b) The California Transportation Infrastructure Funding Task
24 Force shall conduct at least three public hearings on alternative
25 road user funding mechanisms. One hearing each shall be
26 conducted in southern California, the central valley, and northern
27 California.

28 (c) The California Transportation Infrastructure Funding Task
29 Force shall submit a report to the Legislature and Governor by
30 January 1, 2010, with recommendations on alternatives to the
31 current system of taxing road users through per-gallon fuel taxes.

32 (d) Appointees to the California Transportation Infrastructure
33 Funding Task Force shall receive no salary or compensation other
34 than reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses for
35 attendance at meetings and hearings.

36 (e) Strict conflict-of-interest provisions shall be applicable for
37 each appointed member of the California Transportation
38 Infrastructure Funding Task Force and the appointed members
39 shall reflect the ethnic, cultural, and geographic diversity of this
40 state.

1 (f) The department shall provide any staffing needed for the
2 California Transportation Infrastructure Funding Task Force from
3 existing transportation resources made available to the department
4 for transportation planning purposes.

5 (g) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2010,
6 and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that
7 is enacted before January 1, 2010, deletes or extends that date.